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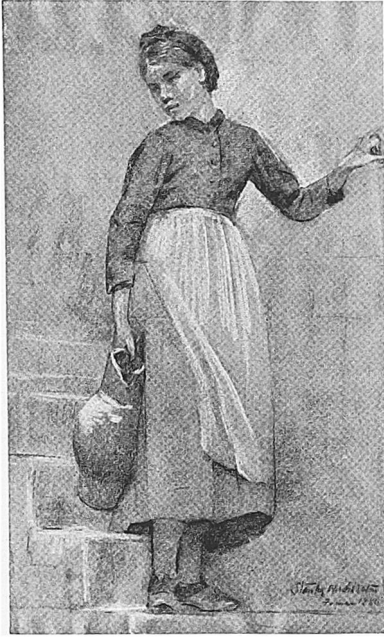
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FROM FINANCE TO ART

BY CHARLOTTE ADAMS.

With original illustrations by Stanley Middleton.



A FRENCH PEASANT.

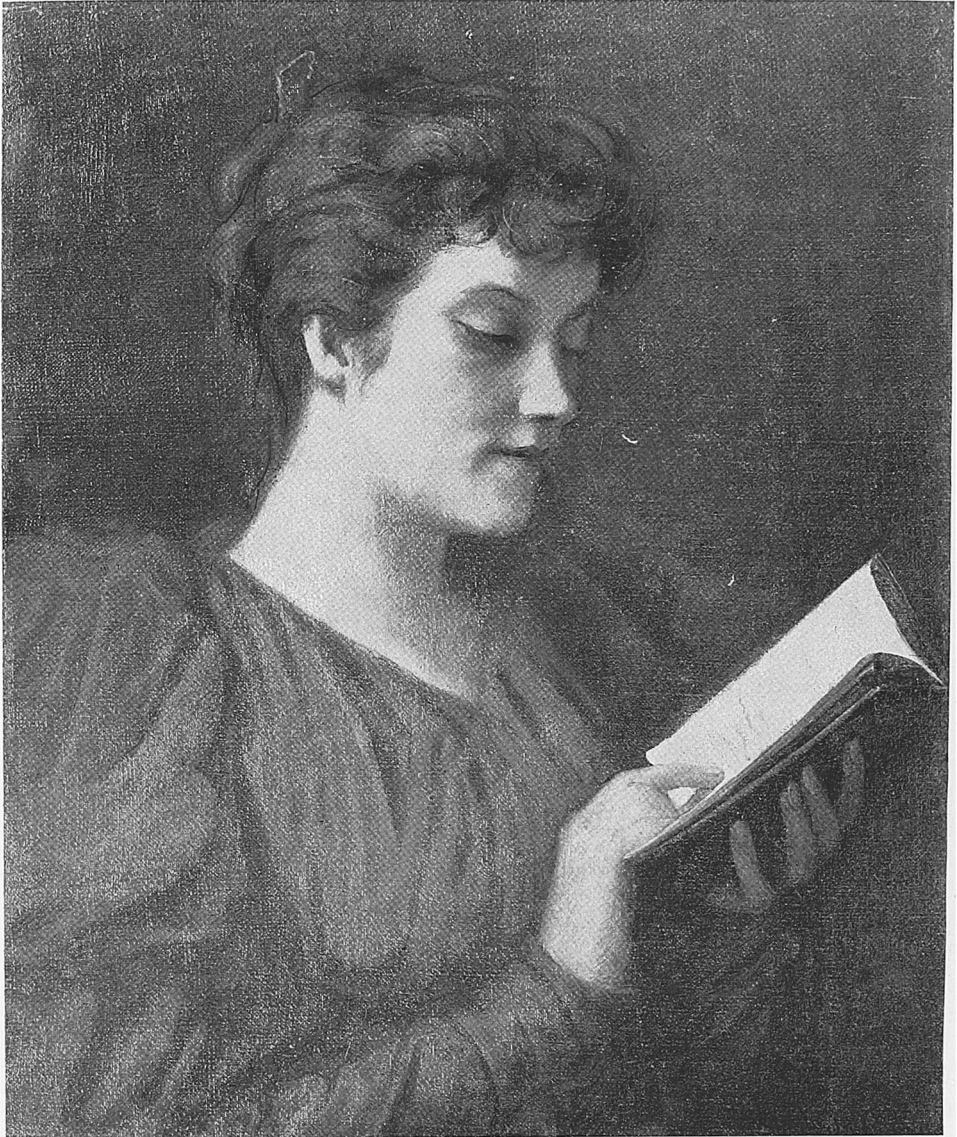
THE fine flower of idealism flourishes on the most arid soil, or rather on soil that seems arid to the class that does not possess or sympathize with the insight of genius. It is given as yet to but a small circle of writers and painters to appreciate the fact that the highest of all forms of idealism, namely, that which springs from realism, lies at the root of American literary and artistic expression to-day. The quickening of the American creative faculty came at the time of the great war of freedom; and in the case of a few strong individualities, like that of Winslow Homer, for instance, the subjective and objective sides of American life met in splendid harmony. Then followed a period of factitious or eclectic cosmopolitan development, which by degrees resolved itself into the study of the national life, without reference to the impulse from without except as regards technical methods.

The existing art system contains numerous individualities reacting upon American life and reacted upon by it, all going to form an inchoate, chaotic, but hopeful and promising mass of creativeness. Mr. Stanley Middleton, clerking it in Wall Street and drawing portraits and caricatures of the American



ROWING PARTY. LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

types of character that unconsciously posed for him, was himself unconsciously developing, in his modest individual way, the nationalistic side of American art. There are many such men in America, all working along the same lines of nationalism, with varying depth of purpose and under different conditions, but



A POEM.

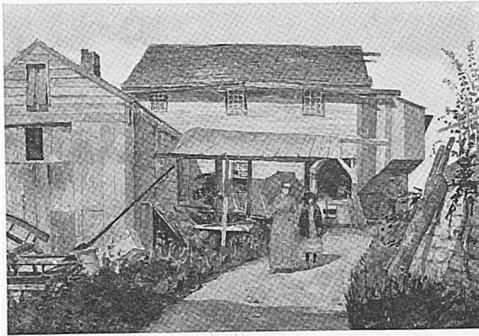
all animated by the same conviction, that the period of organic production in American art has arrived.

Mr. Middleton has not been spoiled by his foreign studies. His preliminary training in American art-schools led him to Paris, where he developed himself on all sides under Harpignies, one of the most significant of French landscape individ-

ualities; Dagnan-Bouveret, a famous realist and modernist; Benjamin Constant, who feels beauty in woman even more keenly than most painters, and apotheosizes it, and under Jacquem de la Cheuvreuse. Excellent influences for a broad-minded painter—none better. The result of this choice of instructors has been the formation of a well-rounded, evenly balanced talent, as much at home in the rendering of Nature as of Humanity. There is no trace of imitativeness in Mr. Middleton's work. One feels that the painter has placed himself



INDIAN CAMP.



EXCELSIOR MILL, MILFORD, PA.

face to face with his subject, has grasped with absolute truth. In his landscapes he shows special feeling for light and atmosphere, and is, moreover, entirely without the mannerisms of which the pupils of distinguished masters are frequently unable to rid themselves. Very fresh in color and true in atmosphere and tone is the *Rowing Party, Lake Champlain*, with its three figures in bright costumes. The foreground is carefully studied, and the sky, with its fleecy clouds, shows brilliant painting. In the *Indian Camp, Excelsior Mill, Milford, Pa., Old Toll-bridge, Middle-*

burg, N. Y., the style is fresh, true, sparkling, and, above all, exact, with that fine exactness which is the result of French training as well as personal temperament. Returning from the Woods has excellent work in the foliage, and is a very good example of this painter's landscape style at its best. "As She came Over the Stile"—a pretty girl standing on a stile under interlaced tree-boughs—is crisp and strong in treatment and well painted.

From Benjamin Constant Mr. Middleton has caught the spirit of the eternal feminine in its most gracious aspect. How charming are these heads of young beauties; these delicate, well-poised heads of the high-bred American type—blonde, auburn, chestnut, thoughtful, gracious, and charming. Beau-



OLD TOLL-BRIDGE, MIDDLEBURG, N. Y.

tifully poised and balanced in composition and general style is the quarter-length called *A Poem*, an auburn-haired girl reading from a book. The purple dress is kept well subordinated to the head, which is delicately and strongly modelled against a dark background. This is a work full of distinction. A *Flemish Belle* is a graceful head encased in a quaint Flemish bonnet, trimmed with a broad red band of figured ribbon and a white cape curtain. A reddish shawl round the neck sets off the delicate oval face and fine straight profile.

An *Oriental* is a head somewhat in the *Constant* vein, with a black and gold veil bound about the hair. Mr. Middleton should devote himself to painting beauties of a classic and romantic type, for in this line he shows the distinctive temperament, combined with technical skill and fine comprehension of his theme. *En Soirée* presents a fair example of the painter's ability in the direction



RETURNING FROM THE WOODS.



A TYPE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

of portraiture. The dark, graceful head is seen in profile against a luminous dark-blue background. A white lace bertha is tastefully disposed over the yellow gown.

More important is the large portrait reproduced in these pages, which for grace in composition and nice balance of line may be warmly recommended. The pale blue dress, the crushed strawberry and ermine cloak, form a scheme of color that commends itself to the beholder at first sight. The head is dignified, well-bred, and graceful. Allowing for differences of age, time, and method, there is something of Copley in the manner in which this portrait is handled. We recommend to Mr. Middleton the study of the suave and beautiful female portraits of the eighteenth century in England and America. There are few accomplished painters of high-bred women in America, and

the demand for them is on the increase. Mr. Middleton has the suavity of the last century combined with the *chic* of the close of the nineteenth. In *A French Peasant* an example is given of Mr. Middleton's ability with charcoal—an artist's achievements in that direction is often more useful to the student than his more finished work. If asked wherein Mr. Middleton is liable to fall below the level of his own best work, one may answer that his danger lies in a certain facility, which is partly natural, partly the result of training. All that teachers can do is



AN ORIENTAL.

to encourage their pupils to use certain processes of composition, drawing, and

painting. They can give them a good example sometimes if they possess the necessary brains and hearts, but this example is a silent one. Paris is the place to learn how to use the tools of art, but when they are learned comes the question: "What have you to say?" Most of our young artists in Paris have nothing to say except what the Frenchmen round about them are saying. They

get into a habit of thinking processes everything, and sneering at "literary" art. Now Mr. Middleton is not exactly in this category, for we see how he has taken hold on American scenes and American types. But his danger lies in that abyss all the same. He is now so facile, so quick and smart with the brush, he may readily forget to keep a firm hand on the helm, and steer that difficult course between art for the craftsman and art for the public, between art for art's sake and art with a message to the world. Summing up, we may say that Mr. Middleton has already shown the qualities which go to form an accomplished artistic personality, and it is probable that the maturity of his talent will present still more creditable results.



A FLEMISH BELLE.



"AS SHE CAME OVER THE STILE."